DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 240 494 CS 007 335

AUTHOR Butterfield, P. H.
TITLE Black Literacy in South Africa--A Comparison of the Contribution of the Public and the Private Sector.
PUB DATE [81]
NOTE 30p.; Best copy available.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Literacy; *Blacks; *Cooperation; Educational Improvement; Education Work Relationship; Foreign Countries; Government Role; Job Skills; *Literacy Education; *Organizations (Groups); *Program Development; School Business Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Apartheid; *South Africa

ABSTRACT

According to a 1980 estimate, 5,678,000 black South African adults are illiterate. A large number of organizations has been created to address the problem--among them such private sector operations as the South African Committee for Higher Education, Operation TEACH (Teach Every African Child), the Bureau of Literacy and Literature, the Urban Foundation, and the government's Department of Education and Training--but their failure to coordinate activities has hampered the promotion of adult literacy. Obstacles to greater coordination include a lack of consensus on the criteria for literacy, disagreement over whether efforts should be concentrated on preventing or curing adult literacy, varied methods of teaching reading, limited government commitment to adult literacy programs, limited funding, and restricted opportunities for black workers even with good literacy skills. Reasons for optimism over improved coordination in the future, however, involve an increased flow of capital into the study of black literacy, signs of increased state involvement in literacy education, the establishment of a black university in a major urban area, and some relaxation of legal requirements for black admission to universities. (MM)

MICROFILMED FROM
BEST AVAILABLE COPY

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED240494

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

X Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

P. H. Butterfield

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Black Literacy in South Africa --- a comparison of the contribution of the public and the private sector.

MICROFILMED FROM
BEST AVAILABLE COPY

Dr. P. H. Butterfield

The study of the problems posed by adult literacy has intensified greatly since the nineteen-seventies for several reasons. Firstly, there was an international concern about the topic that arose immediately after the end of the hostilities of 1939-1945. Then, in the nineteen-sixties the emergence of many newly-independent national states entailed the development of literacy programmes of many types, often assisted by UNESCO. It came as a great surprise to many modernised industrial nations that they, too, had problems of adult illiteracy. Subsequently, the private sector 'discovered' that it had to improve the training of its work force in order to cope with the increasingly complex demands of the new ideas introduced into industrial technology. National governments also became belatedly aware that there was a need for organised adult education programmes. Finally, various voluntary organisations recognised that adult education could assist people to become more independent in their daily lives. [1]

CS007335

In South Africa, unfortunately, the growth in the promotion of adult literacy has been unco-ordinated. Consequently, information relevant to the extent, nature and problems of literacy training in the Republic is incomplete as, to a certain extent different organisations have competed with each other. Such was the interest invoked by the various activities in this specific sector of education that the Human Sciences Research Council (H.S.R.C.) established a Division for Literacy Research in 1978. A first priority for this new undertaking was to conduct a survey of what was being done in adult education with the intentions of supplying a basis for co-ordination and co-operation in the field. It was also hoped that a national plan could be formulated from the facts established by the survey and that priorities could be assigned to various projects. An additional aim was to supply a framework for the planning of future literacy research.[2]

An immediate problem facing the compilers of the survey was the definition of 'literacy' and it was finally decided that it should be equated with Standard four level in the schools (six years of formal education). In 1980 it was estimated that 5,673,000 black adults were illiterate but this is a not particularly reliable figure. Three black Homelands, namely Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda were omitted for the purposes of the 1980 Census so projections made from the 1970 Census were included.[3]

As a consequence of the visit of the members of the American-funded Phelps-Stokes Committee to South Africa in 1921 a number of Joint Councils were established to promote better understanding between black and white people. These bodies multiplied and in May, 1929 a group of eight white men met

in Johannesburg to consider the possibility of founding a national association. Grants were allocated for this purpose by the Phelps-Stokes Fund and the Carnegie Corporation. Thus, was founded the South African Institute for Race Relations, an organisation that has continually expanded its work. Although several leading black citizens and a few Afrikaners of distinction have served the Institute it is a matter of regret that its membership has always been predominantly white English-speaking. However, although grants have been received at different times from overseas sources the bulk of the funds of the Institute have been derived from South African sources.[4]

Arguably the two most important activities of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) have been the assistance given to other bodies to hold or convene conferences on matters affecting race relations and, secondly, to act as an 'unbrella' for services that would, it was anticipated, become autonomous. Thus, in 1946, the Bureau of Literacy & Literature (BLL) was established to train black Y.M.C.A. leaders to teach illiterate black persons to read and write English. For the ensuing decade development proceeded, utilising the methods of Dr. Frank Laubach, in supplying literacy courses in English, Afrikaans, Fanakalo and seven of the indigenous black languages. Furthermore, a course in English for Asian women and an arithmetic programme were also compiled. At the end of the first decade the BLL became autonomous.[5]

Likewise, in 1971, a series of meetings was organised at which prominent black speakers addressed groups of white housewives. In this fashion the

Domestic Workers & Employers Project (DWEP) was established. Women's and church groups became very enthusiastic and set up Centres of Concern where literacy courses were supplied. Three years later this experiment was incorporated into a separate independent department of the Institute from where it expanded its activities nationwide.[6]

From 1977 the Educational Information Centre also became a separate department which now organises an annual Winter School of a fortnight's duration for approximately a thousand black matriculation students. It also publishes a Register of Bursaries to assist black students to further their educational studies. In 1981 two hundred university and 432 school bursaries were awarded by the SAIRR itself. These bursaries pay for fees, boarding and books but, in addition, supplementary tuition is supplied in language, learning skills and career information by qualified teachers. Several black students can pay the fees for the first half of the year but need assistance for the second half so emergency grants are made to these individuals.[7]

The status of the BLL is that of a public company because it receives no State funds although its main object is to promote literacy among the black people of the Republic and South West Africa. Literacy is vaguely defined as the ability to read and write but the problem is the question of language. It is believed that to function efficiently in a modern, industrialised society each black person should be literate in his or her own and one or both of the official languages (English and Afrikaans) in the four aspects of hearing, speaking, reading and writing at the level attained nationally when primary (elementary) school education has been

completed, or that which a white child of approximately eleven years of age attains. However, the BLL provides not only training in the basic skills of literacy but it is extremely active in the teaching of a second language. In addition, all new literates must be encouraged to develop their newly acquired skills by having access to materials which will interest them and so 'follow-on' or 'bridge' literature is provided.[8]

Today literacy primers are supplied in the seven main black languages of the Republic, the five indigenous languages of South West Africa together with English and Afrikaans. Work is mainly conducted in the mines and industry, among domestic workers and also in the Homelands through the various church and welfare organisations. BLL is financed largely by the Barlow-Rand Group of Companies and various mining houses.[9]

Under the terms of the Bantu Education Act, No. 47 of 1953 the control of the education of the black people of the Republic was transferred from the provinces to the Central Government. Within the Department of Native Affairs a division of Bantu Education was established. During the ensuing two decades the number of pupils trebled but expenditure did not increase commensurately so, in consequence, the pupil/teacher ratio became very much larger.[10]

In 1955 the Native Education Department took over the administration of grants for black adult education for which regulations were published two years later, only to be revised in 1962. It was laid down that all classes had to register annually with the Department of Bantu Education if they catered for ten or more pupils. All adult education activities had to be supplied during

school term time only and be open for inspection at all times. Moreover, all teaching appointments were to be subject to departmental approval and no pupils or students could enrol under sixteen years of age. There were lists of other regulations all of which complicated matters badly and, in addition, there were inordinately long delays before the Department answered applications for official registration. Teachers went unpaid for long periods and, consequently, many schools and classes were closed. State subsidies were then progressively reduced from R46,000 in 1958-59 to R1,000 in 1962-63.[11]

Impending legislation soon made it blatantly obvious that that the English-medium universities of Cape Town, Natal and the Witwatersrand would be barred to all but a bare minimum of black students so, in 1958 the South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED) was founded. The aim of this new body was to prepare students for the external degrees of the University of London by supplying bursaries to pay for the fees and books. In addition, tutorials were provided and lectures were given by voluntary teachers. This pioneer project lasted for twelve years and encountered many difficulties. It was found that black students needed six years of study prior to entering for the G.C.E. 'A' level examinations, the necessary qualifying standard for British university entrance,[12] and few passed.

However, in the late nineteen-sixties it was realised that request for financial aid for black students enrolled at the University of South Africa (UNISA) should be considered sympathetically. Thus, the bursaries system was expanded to include tutorials and financial aid for these students. Again difficulties

were encountered, the two main ones being that the schools for black pupils did not prepare their scholars for university courses and, secondly, that the standard of English taught in these schools was extremely poor. Such information caused the SACHED executive to decide to work at secondary school and university level. Furthermore, it was agreed to assist adults rather than children and so a non-commercial correspondence college, Turret, was set up to cater for adults who wanted to study for the Junior Certificate and matriculation examinations. To consolidate the entire project in 1975 the SACHED Trust was founded and centres established in Durban and Cape Town.[13]

In 1978 the Publishing Project was initiated by developing two projects, The Reader, a publication of post-literacy standard in June and Learning Post, a weekly supplement to The Reader in August. Unfortunately, strikes in the offices of the newspapers concerned in publishing these periodicals interrupted the continuity of the project. Nevertheless, twenty four issues were published in the first year of its operations and thirty four in the second year. These strikes at the Post and Sunday Post virtually terminated this experiment because the government, after enduring eight weeks non-production of the journals, informed the printers that they would be banned immediately if they were re-published.[14]

Turret College, unhappily, collapsed in the aftermath of the Soweto riots but it was planned to revive it in January, 1982 with two hundred specially selected students, all of whom were to be candidates for the Junior Matriculation Board examinations. It was thus hoped to improve the appalling figures that demonstrated that only six out of every ten thousand black students

commenced university courses in the Republic. Thus, in all probability, Turret College will become the most important distance learning centre in South Africa.[15]

In August, 1966 Operation Upgrade was commenced by Louise D'Oliviera, a co-worker with Dr. Laubach, and her husband, Sandy. To begin with a primer and follow-up reader in English were published as well as a Teacher's Manual and, in addition, the Bantu Education Department assisted an investigation into the Zulu Language. By October, 1968 the first literacy training course for teachers of Zulu was held and, by the beginning of the following year, the first Zulu adults were able to read and write in their own language. At the end of the first twelve years operations several thousand teachers had been trained and 120,000 illiterate persons had been taught in nine different languages. Not only the newly independent Homelands have adopted the methods of Operation Upgrade but also one mental hospital. Companies can initiate literacy programmes by ensuring that two individuals are trained as literacy teachers by attending courses lasting five days (30 hours) at Operation Upgrade centres. Those selected for such training should be of Standard eight educational equivalent in speaking, reading and writing English. A trained literacy teacher should be able to instruct classes of 15 to 25 adults for an optimum of two classes weekly of 1½-2 hours duration. Reading in the vernacular is first taught in a course of three to four months followed by one of six to eight months in English as a second language. Training fees for industry are R210 but bursaries are available for up to eighty per cent of the total cost from church, welfare and educational organisations.[16]

Despite these limited advances concerned individuals remained worried about the poor educational facilities available for black people. A Johannesburg newspaper offered these persons a unique opportunity to actually do something about this source of potential conflict in November, 1971. An appeal was made in this journal for funds to finance the erection of additional schools in Soweto where, it was claimed, there was a shortage of approximately seven hundred classrooms. Thus was launched Operation TEACH (Teach Every African CHild) with the two basic motives of, firstly, ensuring that there was a place in school available for every black child in Soweto and, secondly, pandering to the enlightened self-interest of every employer of blacks. [17]

A decade later a summary was published of the achievements of this innovatory project. Altogether two million rand had been raised from the readers and this sum had financed the building of forty four schools and, in so doing, had supplied classes for one hundred and eighty thousand black children who, otherwise, might never had had the opportunity of being educated. In this manner the effects of the pernicious elements of education for black pupils, namely the high pupil/teacher ratios (20:1); the platoon or double sessions and shadow schools were greatly reduced if not totally eliminated. Tshedimosko School was the first to be completed in January, 1972 and, by 1973, it was estimated that every English-medium school in the Republic had donated money to the fund. It is, perhaps, worth mentioning that during the Soweto riots of 1976 not one of the TEACH schools was damaged except for a couple of broken windows as compared with the extensive destruction of the schools produced by the hated Bantu Education Department. [18]

Other English medium newspapers in the Republic have,

subsequently, started their own TEACH programmes but although it must be conceded that many Afrikaners have probably contributed to such schemes nevertheless not one of the many Afrikaans-language journals has instituted its own project.

One cause of the poor educational results achieved by many black scholars has been the low qualifications of many of the teachers in these schools. It therefore follows that the in-service training of these pedagogues should make a major contribution to the prevention, as opposed to the cure of illiteracy. From 1974 the Transvaal Teachers Association had conducted a teachers' centre where teachers from all the ethnic groups were invited to attend many of the functions. Owing to the success of this pilot scheme it was decided, from the commencement of the year 1981, to reconstitute this centre as the Independent Teachers Centre, run by a Board of Control on which the Transvaal Teachers Association (TTA), the Teachers Association of South Africa (TASA) and the Transvaal United African Teachers Association are represented as well as the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg College of Education, the Johannesburg College for Early Education and the principals of two private schools. All the teachers associations give financial support as does the university and applications have also been made for grants from several trusts. Premises have been supplied rent free by the University of the Witwatersrand and, in all possible ways the strictest economy is ensured. The nett revenue from courses in the first year of the work of the centre was estimated as about R2,000 whilst the sale of publications realised a very similar amount. A policy was adopted of maintaining low fees for teachers and schools to ensure that all eligible for the courses were not deferred by inability to afford the expense

involved. Although this project is still in its infancy the important feature of the programme is that the numbers of teachers enrolling for the courses supplied is increasing and the proportion of black teachers in each of the activities of the Centre is highly encouraging to the sponsors of this enterprise.[19]

Although it was the Soweto riots that engendered a series of developments in the education provided for the black peoples of South Africa 1981 was, undoubtedly, the most momentous year for the education of black people in the Republic. The HSRC published two major reports, one the much heralded De Lange Report[20] and the second being the first of two planned volumes on literacy.[21] A further significant development was the passage of the Vista University Act, No. 106 of 1981 through the legislative assembly to come into operation on January 1st, 1981. It established a university for black students with its administrative centre in Pretoria and projected out campuses in Soweto and other places. An outcry was raised by white liberals, usually English-speaking, and all the English-language newspapers joined in the condemnation of the innovation. However, such an institution was forcibly advocated by an outstanding black academic a short time previously[22] and senior black university staffs have also indicated their approval of the legislation. Among their reasons for supporting the new university are two major considerations the first being that a university for black students has, for the first time, been established in an urban area and not in the bundu (outback). Secondly, the foundation of this new centre of higher education acknowledges de facto if not de jure, the existence of the urban black

population. Despite all these developments the most important educational event of the year 1981 was the foundation of the Urban Foundation, an organisation operating as a private company with Harry Oppenheimer as the chairman and Anton Rupert as his deputy. Thus, two of the most important business leaders in South Africa, the one English-speaking and the other Afrikaans-speaking are intimately involved in this new major undertaking. Upon an original capital of twenty five million rand subscribed by commerce and industry the new body planned to finance projects in three crucial areas, namely education, transport and housing. Each of these projects has its own manager but Dr. Robin Lee was selected as the managing director of the whole operation. After long deliberations a memorandum was produced in May, 1981 in which it was announced that the Urban Foundation propsed to undertake a design study for the future provision of non-formal education in the Republic of South Africa. Significantly, it was asserted that the results of this investigation would be made available either to the Main Committee of the present Investigation into Education or to such a body as was established to co-ordinate further investigation on a national level. It was further contended that the Main Committee had identified the provision of non-formal education as a high priority in any new education system for the Republic and that it would report accordingly to the Cabinet. To further its aims the Urban Foundation intended to establish by scientific enquiry an appropriate framework for the management, financing, provision, control and development of non-formal education in South Africa to the year 2000.

The De Lange Report had asserted that non-formal education was fourth in the line of priorities for action in South African education. Ahead of it were compulsory schooling, a pre-basic bridging period in the formal system and vocational education but, in its turn, it was slightly ahead of the opening of tertiary institutions to all races. Two other principles were enunciated in the report, the first being that education should aim to achieve a positive relationship between the formal, non-formal and informal aspects of education in the school, society and family. Principle number seven asserted that the private sector and the state should have a shared responsibility for the provision of non-formal education. Also advocated was the establishment as soon as possible of the necessary infrastructure for the provision of non-formal education. It was also suggested that up to three years of formal education could be obtained through the non-formal education system.[24]

The mission of the Urban Foundation was described as aiming to promote peaceful structure change in South Africa through a participatory process between the community and the private sector, with co-operation from the public sector, in order to achieve a just society. It was decided to utilise 'continuing education' as the working term to include certain aspects of education among the adult population. Two concepts were then postulated for examination the first one concerned with the divisions of the content of education. It was claimed that industry had for a considerable time divided the possible content for learning into three

categories, knowledge, skills and attitudes. When the second concept was introduced it was asseverated that the levels of importance or relevance attached to objectives for a learning experience. 'Folk' knowledge of vocational trainers, it was alleged, divided the level of the importance of objectives into three categories which were 'traditionally' called the Must Know, Good to Know and Nice to Know. The adjective and the adverb stressed, once again, a certain vagueness of acquaintance with certain learning theories although the argument that adult educators often queried the value of certain school subjects is not refutable.[25]

It is rather unfortunate the Urban Foundation did not agree to adopt the definitions postulated by the De Lange Committee. Instead th private sector research settled upon continuing education as possessing four major divisions, namely (i) compensatory; (ii) community; (iii) proficiency and (iv) professional. A synthesis was therefore attempted between the two different definitions and resulted as follows:-

De Lange:	Formal.	Non-Formal.	Informal.
	Professional.	Compensatory.	Most community.
		Proficiency.	
		Certain Community.	
		(Family Planning).	

[26]

Three phases were envisaged in the investigation for the Lobbying Process the first of these scheduled to be completed by November 30th, 1981 involved securing an agreement on the project goal. Phase II has been timed for completion by March 31st, 1982 when the feedback and first drafts should be available. August 31st of this year is the dead-line for the completion of Phase III

when it is hoped that the Urban Foundation can motivate acceptance by its own interest groups.[26]

When the developments in the educational cum black literacy field in South Africa are listed chronologically it becomes immediately apparent that they are all the result of haphazard organisations pursuing their aims and objectives without consultation or co-operation with other interested parties. Moreover, a basic dichotomy exists with regard to the solutions to the problem of black literacy. Medical doctors would contend that it is better to prevent than to cure so the TEACH project can be seen as a programme of prevention whereas the BLL operations are definitely seen as a cure for this social evil. Furthermore, owing to the manner in which literacy organisations have monopolised agencies concerned with the promotion of literacy in the Republic there has been a tendency to emphasise materials as opposed to other aspects of training. Funds have been scarce so several of these associations have been compelled to supplement their revenues from the proceeds of the sales of their materials. Operation Upgrade and BLL particularly have competed in this market each achieving some success, the latter is dominant in Lebowa, Gazankulu and Venda besides possessing a virtual monopoly in South West Africa and a predominance in the mining industry. The former supplies the Department of Education and Training (the former Bantu Education Department) with the majority of the materials for its centres besides which it is the leading agency for supervising literacy programmes in the Transkei, KwaZulu and Bophuthatswana.[27]

Again BLL supplies an individualised but highly

structured method of instruction which, in the vernacular, is based on syllables and favours a Look and See method rather than phonetical approaches. Operation Upgrade is an association that favours the Laubach approach but, irrespective of the merits of each scheme, there would have been greater improvements in literacy generally if both organisations had agreed to adopt the same method of tuition.[23]

Perhaps the greatest example of the general lack of any systematic approach to solving this South African problem of the literacy is the position of SACHED and its correspondence college, Turret. On its original foundation this institution commenced its work in the belief that it was children that needed its services most urgently. In the light of relevant experience it was soon discovered that adults had more urgent claims upon it. Today under its Director, John Samuels, an Asian citizen of the Republic, who has himself experienced the tribulations of the apartheid policy, SACHED headquarters is an inspiring place to visit. One has no doubt that the present activities of the institution are not only thriving but also well operated and efficiently planned. However, this work is not basically literacy training but may be better described as a programme of 'cultural awareness' which, in itself, requires a basic literacy to be possessed by all its students. Nevertheless, although the Trust is basically non-political it has utilised the various journals published pre-eminently for black people in order to ensure the circulation of its informative educational supplements. Thus when these newspapers have been banned by the Nationalist Governments the

numerous students of the two institutions have been the sufferers. A set of the issues of Learning Post is, therefore, a very difficult publication to obtain but it is essential to examine these supplements in order to secure some insight into what the SACHED Trust has been trying to achieve in the field of improved educational facilities for the black people of South Africa. [29]

There are several small undertakings concerned with the quest for the improvement of literacy among the black population of the Republic, one of them being arguably the most significant. In May 1979 Dr. Kenneth Baucom, an American citizen domiciled in South Africa and, incidentally, an international authority on the problems of illiteracy founded Consulting Educators and Trainers. Baucom is one of UNESCO's major advisers in this particular field and for a number of years he was the supervisor of the Anglo-American literacy work among its black employees. In his new undertaking he aimed to advise companies on the design of training schemes; to train instructors for these business organisations; to devise courses and materials for specific situations and, finally, to supply monitoring services. Owing to the reputation of Baucom this new service developed rapidly and, during the year 1980, it controlled 43 literacy centres and approximately 300 instructors and, by the last quarter of the year it was attracting students and companies away from BIL. It is confirmed belief of Baucom that the most fruitful area for the improvement of black literacy is in industrial training where intensive in-service courses with well-trained tutors and concentrated back-up services should supply the best results. His methods are eclectic and depend on the communication needs at each centre but, in

any case, priority is always given to language skills for literacy as such is only one element in the programme, as is numeracy. Furthermore, Baucom wishes to develop what he terms 'bridging programmes' to solve this perennial problem of keeping the newly literate interested in maintaining and increasing the recently acquired skill.[30]

It is, perhaps, worthy of mention that yet another organisation called Learn and Teach operates from offices in Johannesburg. This body was established in 1974 as a welfare undertaking, the limited financial backing that was available, namely less than R30,000 (approximately $ 30,000 per annum) not being conducive to any major success or development. Although 44 literacy instructors and 408 students were involved in the 22 literacy groups utilising the techniques propounded by this organisation and a dozen instructors' training courses were conducted, paradoxically no basic primers were produced. Literacy teaching, as advocated by this body, is often referred to as the dialogue method, a system that has certain affinities with the approach adopted by Paulo Freire in his conscientization programmes. Although it has been argued that this organisation aims to develop the ability of the individual to cope with the changing environment rather than to create political awareness the somewhat furtive existence of the operations has, undoubtedly, caused some concern to the Nationalist Government. However, it can be contended that, irrespective of political issues, the work of this body is not impressive in any sphere. All the readers published are anthologies of the students' writings and there are history booklets. English is the language used most commonly with Xhosa the second most important. Nevertheless, the total approach of Learn and Teach to the acquisition of second-language skills is

very poorly developed and, moreover, the viability of the entire system of teaching reading is questionable and has certainly never been demonstrated convincingly.
It can, of course, be contended that agencies approached for funds require some evidence that a minimum of results will ensue in the form of improved literacy of their workers, hence the limited financial support for this particular body. [31]

It is pertinent, at this point, to examine the role played by the Department of Education and Training in the improvement of the standards of literacy amongst the black people for whose education it is responsible. As this government supplied only R2,000,000 for adult education in the year 1980 compared with the R5,000,000 contributed by the private sector it is manifestly obvious that State is more concerned with the 'prevention' of black illiteracy than with its remedies amongst the adult population. Mr. W.A. Cruywagen, the Minister of Education and Training, has asserted that, in a fast developing country such as South Africa, non-formal education can play a most important part and that the State was well aware of the work being conducted by various welfare, cultural and religious organisations in addition to the manifold training programmes supplied within industry and commerce. He contended that the State, through its section for Adult Education, was increasingly involved with non-formal education, including literacy training. He was certain that individuals who were illiterate benefited from the acquisition of these skills. Basically, he argued, Africa was faced with a proliferation of languages so that the question arose that a definition of literacy pertinent to the Continent was required. Mother- tongue

literacy was considered by UNESCO to be the ability to read and write enough to utilise these skills for effective functioning in his (or her) group or community. It was most noticeable that, in South Africa, it could be argued that literacy could be defined as the ability to read and write in the home language and, also, in one or both of the official languages, English and Afrikaans. The official policy of the government was that illiterate persons should first be made literate in the language they knew best after which the learning of English and/or Afrikaans could be attempted with the additional motivation of success in becoming literate in the mother tongue. A defensive note was introduced into his speech when he suggested that his department became concerned in adult literacy programmes as late as 1975 because there were other more urgent priorities, all of which were directly concerned with the formal school system for black children. In his summarisation of the problems connected with black literacy he stressed four particular aspects, the first being the necessity to test the level of literacy attained by individuals. Secondly, he advocated that certificates should be issued to supply supporting evidence of the standards of literacy achieved. His third requirement was that suitable reading matter should be available to newly literate individuals and, finally, he wanted the mass media to be utilised in the campaign to further literacy.[32] Upon reading the text of this peroration one cannot escape the conclusion that the Minister thought that literacy programmes were not his greatest priority and that they could be left to the agencies already operating them.

Amid this mass of heterogeneous bodies catering for the improvement of the literacy of the black adults

in South Africa, each with its own aims and methods it is obviously desirable to raise the question whether there is any prospect of a greater rationalisation in the future. Optimism is justified on several grounds, mainly owing to the intervention of the Urban Foundation into this muddled field of philanthropic endeavours. Firstly, there has been an increased flow of capital into the study of black literacy in the Republic with both white groups, the leaders of Afrikaner and English-speaking business and mining interests deeply involved. Secondly, for the development of the literacy programmes envisaged by the Foundation Dr. Baucom has been appointed with, once again, adequate funding. Thirdly, the establishment of the Division for Literacy Research by the Human Sciences Research Council augurs well for the increased involvement of the State in the solutions proposed and adopted for the eradication of this blight upon a modern industrialised society. Fourthly, the establishment of the new Vista University in the major urban area of the Republic must, of necessity, motivate many more black pupils to aim for a university education which, of course, will be more beneficial when the libraries of the Municipalities of Johannesburg and Pretoria are easily accessible as well as the libraries of the future campuses. Fifthly, over the past three or four years the legal requirement that black, coloured and Asian students must secure ministerial permission before they can be accepted for study at universities for white students has been progressively relaxed. Consequently, the numbers of such students has increased substantially and this development , in its turn, must be an additional motivating factor for members of these ethnic groups to desire improved literacy. Sixthly, within the past year

both of the Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand have established Departments of Adult Education where the development of resource centres for the study of the problems of black literacy are already in the process of development. In Johannesburg also the first steps have been taken to establish a documentation centre where individuals from industry and commerce can not only study accounts of what has been tried and achieved by other companies but also deposit their own research findings and thus assist others to benefit from their experiences.

A note of warning must, however, be sounded about literacy programmes sponsored by industry and commerce which, of their very nature, pose a dichotomy of opposing viewpoints. From the aspect of the company concerned the programme is essential primarily because it relates to having a supply of employees with skills needed to conduct a profitable undertaking. For the individual worker the programme is inviting because it offers an avenue to self-actualisation and self-development. Job evaluation using the Paterson Plan with its division of jobs into six bands, labelled A to F, rates Band 'A' as the lowest level of decision-making and Band 'F' as the top management decision-making level. Analyses made in South Africa suggest that Bands 'C' to 'F' require the equivalent of a Standard 10 education (ten plus years of formal education), but exceptions can be anticipated. An education of this level is beyond the attainment of the literacy organisations and literacy workers. For these desirable activities the best that can be achieved is a literacy level able to cope with Bands 'A' and 'B'. It is necessary to understand that the lowest level includes some illiterate manual labourers and some individuals who

possess ten years of formal schooling. Band 'A' may be designated the level of defined decisions whilst Band 'B' is that of automatic decisions. Although there are several sub-divisions within each of these bands an occupation such as that of a copy-typist comes within the 'A' Band whilst the supervisor of a manual labourer would be classified within Band 'B' even if he himself were illiterate. Workers in industry and commerce are well aware of this whereas the literacy worker is not. It could almost be asserted that the benefits of attendance at literacy classes is not so obvious as has been maintained. Furthermore, an illiterate supervisor of manual labourers may be at the top of Band 'B' but, of necessity, has insufficient education to rise into Band 'C' and, in fact, there is no possibility that he will ever achieve this goal, upward mobility is impossible except for those members of the two classes who possess ten years of formal education. Any individual will learn something ONLY if it meets one or more of his needs. Thus, it can be contended that management in South Africa accepts that to possess a work force that has its needs met within the work situation there must be opportunities for self-development, self-growth and higher self-esteem.

33

Finally, literacy programmes involve not only the State and the private sectors but there is, of course, the opinion of a third party, the consumer or the black worker and/or citizen. Surveys conducted by SACHED annually supply some guides to the attitudes and interests of black adults. Usually these investigations were carried out to ascertain the ideas of the readers of the various supplements published by the Trust with a view to improving their contents and

inducing a greater sense of involvement amongst the readers. Most of the readers were found to be in the 16-24 years age group or, to a lesser degree, in the 25-35 section. Of these readers the majority were male and living in the urban districts of the Transvaal, with in most cases between one and three years of secondary schooling although approximately 10% had between three and five years, the equivalent of Standard 10. Again most of these readers were earning around R200 per month but despite the similarity in wages there were discernible three distinct categories of readers, the first being the highly motivated reader determined to improve his education through paper qualifications. Then there were general interest readers who read to improve their knowledge in a more general manner and, finally, many casual readers who were prepared to read anything that interested them. Turret College students asked for courses in arithmetic, mathematics and commercial arithmetic followed by aspects of the English language and physical science. There was virtually no request for Afrikaans language instruction. Practically all these students had completed their full primary school education with a number of them having continued for a few years into secondary schools, but the results of these surveys suggest that they were desirous of improving their vocational skills presumably in order to justify increased remuneration. [34] One may conclude that the SACHED Trust together with its Turret College subsidiary is achieving superb results with students who are already basically literate, a finding which, in turn, suggests that basic literacy is in itself a motivating factor of great importance.

None of these investigations has answered the

fundamental question ---- What is literacy? Is it really 'a person ..... who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement on his everyday life', that is literate?[35] It has been argued that there is, in actual fact, proper literacy and improper literacy with the former being the ability to utilise the results of reading to interpret life whilst the latter indicates merely the ability to follow the lines in a book along and then down the pages.[36] Is the child who is starting to attend school at ages ranging from five to seven years illiterate for it certainly appears so if these definitions are accepted. Furthermore if substantial funds are to be invested in literacy programmes results must be produced to justify any educational priority for expenditure. It is, therefore, a most pertinent question that is posed, namely how can these programmes be validated? The most obvious weakness of the literacy programmes in South Africa is that there is virtually no follow-up of students completing these courses. Even the BLL which offers mining companies a service that includes visiting the successful participants of their courses at intervals afterwards has discovered that very few of the companies are interested in subscribing for this desirable attempt to evaluate literacy programmes.

CONCLUSION:

Thus, it can be seen that the first organisation in South Africa to concern itself with black, Asian and coloured peoples was founded in response to an external stimulus, namely the Phelps-Stokes reports. However, this reaction to the investigations of this important committee was not unique because all the Imperial governments with colonies in Africa were likewise jolted out of their apathy

or complacency regarding the educational facilities available in their territories.[37] However, in the case of South Africa the influence of Dr. C.T. Loram[38] and his writings cannot be overstressed in the establishment of the South African Institute of Race Relations. Nevertheless, it was the stimulus afforded by another external event, the Second World War, 1939-1945 that precipitated the second major development for the military authorities discovered that the black and coloured soldiers, although loyal and willing, were failing to understand mechanical and electrical equipment because they lacked a sound basic education. War, not for the first time, had revealed these defects and so the SAIRR introduced its first education programmes including a basic literacy course. Subsequently, the motivation for extending such programmes has been an internal development, mainly political in the election of the Nationalist government in 1948 and its ensuing apartheid legislation. Then, more recently, the Soweto Riots of 1976[39] and the economic development of the country have had their influence for there has been a large expenditure of funds by the government to improve the educational facilities in Soweto, particularly with regard to technical education. Industry, commerce and mining have also recognised their responsibility to provide educational facilities for their workers with the establishment of the Urban Foundation. The future therefore seems quite promising PROVIDED that the various organisations supplying literacy courses will accept rationalisation of their activities. Once again utilising the medical analogy of prevention and cure it must be recommended that the BLL should be supported financially as the 'cure' agency and SACHED as the natural development of the basic literacy courses whilst the TEACH programme is the obvious

'prevention' cure for funding. Some of the reasons for supporting the BLL are its situation on the Rand, the main centre for South African industry, commerce and mining; its initiative in attempting to develop 'follow-up' programmes; its origins as a branch of the SAIRR ensure that it would be supported by its 'parent'; the multi-racial aspect of its operations which involve a British citizen, an Afrikaner and a black teacher and the presence on its executive committee of Dr. Baucom.

REFERENCES:

(1). I must thank Mr. Edward French for allowing me to read and utilise the first draft of his report to the Human Sciences Research Council (H.S.R.C.) to be published early in 1983, entitled The Promotion of Literacy in South Africa: a survey. pp. 1-2.

(2). French. op cit. pp. 3-5.

(3). French. op cit. p. 4.

(4). Hellmann, Ellen. (1979) The South African Institute of Race Relations, 1929-1979. (Johannesburg, South African Institute of Race Relations. pp. 4-6.

(5). Hellmann. op cit. pp. 22-23.

(6). Hellmann. op cit. p. 24.

(7). South African Institute of Race Relations (1981). 51st Annual Report, 1979-80. (Johannesburg, South African Institute of Race Relations). pp. 10-11.

(8). Bureau of Language and Literature (1978). Bureau of Literacy Pamphlet No. BLL/0778/1/H.1. (Johannesburg, Bureau of Language and Literature).

(9). The seven languages of the black peoples of the Republic are Zulu, Xhosa, Sesuto, Tswana, Tsonga, Venda and Pedi. In South-West Africa (Namibia) the five languages of the black peoples are Ovambo, NDonga (Ovamboland), Kwangali (Kavango), Damara and Herero.

(10). Malherbe, E.G. (1977). Education in South Africa. Vol. 2. 1923-1975. (Cape Town, Juta & Co.). pp. 548-550.

(11). Horrell, Muriel. (1968). Bantu Education to 1968. (Johannesburg, South African Institute of Race Relations). pp. 18-20.

(12). The Sached Trust. (1980). Annual Report, 1979. (Johannesburg, SACHED). pp. 3-4.

(13). Annual Report. op cit. pp. 3-4.

(14). The Sached Trust. (1981). Annual Report, 1980. (Johannesburg, SACHED). pp. 13-33.

(15). The Rand Daily Mail. (20th November, 1981). (Johannesburg, Argus Press). p. 9.

(16). Operation Upgrade of Southern Africa. Upgrading Adult Literacy --- Some Questions and Answers. (Durban, Operation Upgrade). I am indebted to Mrs. J. Eriksson for this material which has no specified date of publication.

(17). The Star. (7th October, 1971). (Johannesburg) p. 25.

(18). The Star. (7th October, 1981). (Johannesburg). p. 16.

(19). The Star. (October, 1981). Teachers' Newsletter, No. 13. (Johannesburg). I am indebted to Dr. Auerbach for this material.

(20). Human Sciences Research Council. (1981). Provision of Education in the R.S.A. (De Lange Report). (Pretoria, H.S.R.C.)

(21). Hauptfleisch, T. (Ed.). Literacy in South Africa --- Proceedings of the Literacy '78 Conference convened by the H.S.R.C. Johannesburg, July 1978. (Pretoria, H.S.R.C.).

(22). Mphalele, Es'kia. (1980). Oration at the April, 1980 Graduation Ceremonies in Gazette, No. 57. (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand Press). pp. 4-6. Mphalele was formerly Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin.

(23). Seminar and Workshop. (23rd October, 1981). Continuing Education Project. I am indebted to Professor Denzil Russell, Division of Adult Education, University of the Witwatersrand f for this material.

(24). De Lange Report. op cit. p. 15 and p. 216.

(25). Paper 3, as per Reference (23).

(26). Outline of Project Design, Figure 2. Reference (23).

(27). French. op cit. pp. 12-25.

(28). French. op cit. pp. 20-23.

(29). John Samuels kindly donated a set of these issues specifically to support this paper. I am duly indebted to him.

(30). Personal interview with Dr. Kenneth Baucom in October 1981.

(31). French. op cit. pp. 19-20.

(32). The Hon. W.A. Cruywagen, the Minister of Education & Training. Opening Address in Reference (21). pp. 5-13.

(33). Baucom, Kenneth. The Need for Literacy in Commerce & Industry in Reference (21). pp. 27-33.

(34). SACHED Trust. See Reference (12). pp. 49-82.

(35). Quoted by Harman, D. (1970). Illiteracy: An Overview in Harvard Education Review, 2. pp. 226-228.

(36). O,Neil, W. (1970). Properly Literate in Harvard Education Review, 2. pp. 260-263.

(37). See Scanlon, D.G. (Ed). (1964). Traditions of African Education. (New York, Teachers College Press). pp. 51-92.

(38). Dr. Charles Templeman Loram (1879-1940). Dictionary of South African Biography, Vol. III. pp. 537-538. Loram was the Chief Inspector of Native Education in Natal, 1917-1920. He served as General Smuts' personal representative on the two Phelps-Stokes Committees. In 1931 he was appointed Sterling Professor of Education, Yale University in which position he died at Ithaca in 1940. His book The Education of the South African Native was published by Longmans, Green & Co., London in 1917 and proved to be very influential in determining the format of education for black children in the ensuing years.

(39). South African Institute of Race Relations (1978). South Africa in Travail --- The Disturbances of 1976/77. (Johannesburg, South African Institute of Race Relations). pp. 1-68 provide a daily journal of events and pp. 136-141 gives a series of recommendations to remedy the causes of the disorders.

(((((( ))))))